Its Abuses, Imperfections, and utter inefficiency. INABILITY TO SUPPORT LOW RATES OF POSTAGE UNDER THE PRESENT COMPLICATED

SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTS,
MAIL TRANSPORTATION, DISTRIBUTION AND
DELIVERY.

The Bowen Post System Explained -- Ar entire re-organization of the Material and Discipline of Post Offices proposed, by which a Saving of over \$1,200,000 per annum is effected, besides securing greater celerity in Transportation and Delivery, with Rates of Postage consi-derably Reduced and Simplified.

Sin :- A great deal has been said, during the last few years, on the subject of cheap postage. The subjest has been discussed very extensively in Congress, as well as by the press throughout the country. while, in some of the large cities, organized bodies, with authorized agents, to carry out and promulgate their views, have assumed a particular control over the entire range and details of the cause. I have, myself, not been an inattentive spectator of the various discussions of the subject, nor have I

been wholly a disinterested one. Pretending, therefore, (as I think I may,) to some practical knowledge of our post system, I am of the clear opinion that no law contemplating reduced rates, can, or ought ever to be carried out under the present defective and very expensive discipline of the Department. And while I concede the necessity for low rates, (in a country like our own, particularly,) I believe that very few of those who have been active in their advocacy of their favorite policy, really know anything about the most practical and prominent point involved -if they do, they have most inexcusably overlooked it. I allude to the reorganization, on a more economical and superior basis, of the entire system of Post Office counts, mail transportation, distribution and delivery. It is in reference to these points, that our post yetem is defective, and, consequently, very expensive. To saddle sheap rates upon such a system, were only to sink the Department into debt, at the were only to sink the Department into debt, at the same time that we destroy all its remaining energy. A wise physician will restore his patient to a healthy condition, before allowing him to assume additional labors and responsibilities—hence, no practical good could flow from reduced rates of postage, when the department is not placed in a condition to improve the character of its transportation, distribution and delivery,—for, if these are to depreciste (as they certainly must, under the prevailing system) in proportion to the a condition to improve the character of its transportation, distribution and delivery,—for, if these are to depreciste (as they certainly must, under the prevailing system.) in proportion to the reduction efthe rates, and the amount of additional matter such reduction ercates, no useful end, it seems to me, can be achieved. The advocates of low rates seem never to have thought of this, for the whole drift of their argument is this, that whereas, the cheap postage rates of Great British work well, ergo, they will work well in the United States. This argument slways produced its effect upon the unthinking; and the statistics of the British post office are presented with an air of triumph; but have any of these writers ever analyzed the machinery of the British pest system, or have they even inquired into the secret operations of our own! If they had, they could not fail to have been struck with the entire and complete dissimilarity of the twe systems—a dissimilarity which no ingenuity could harmonize. In England there are but a few hunfred post offices—probably not ever 1,500. There are few mail routes, of course, and they cover but a very small area, probably not more than an amount equal to New York and Pennsylvania. There are three classes of office, the one checking upon the other—and the mails all radiate from the centre, which is the General Post Office of London. It is, therefore, a centre-fagal as well as a cear-epetal system, requiring no mail distribution, and no system of accounts like our own. Any post system, in such a small area, could be managed with emparative ease, and with very little expense; but it is far otherwise in the United States. Here we have over twenty thousand not offices, scattere i over the length and breadth, a "whole boundless continent," forming a vast aft work of mail routes, over seven thousand in number, embracing every description and grade of service, and varying in length from one unie to one thousand miles. Our post system is by far the most complexity of the accounts, it

very much to lament, for he some time ago urged this as the most serious obstacle he had to contend with in carrying on the affairs of the service. But, however ignorant and incompetent many of the agents of the Department may be, they are, nevertheless, required to make reports. Every postmaster, no matter how trifling or unimportant his office may be, has to keep an account current, in which are entered all the letters and papers received, as well as those sent. He has to post bill all his mail matter, of course, while many have to keep mail registers, (receiving extra compensation therefore) as well as make miscellaneous reports arising from a general supervision over the mail service in their respective neighborhoods. On a fair average, every postmaster makes at least five reports, of one kind or another, every quarter, which gives twenty per year, making an aggregate of four hundred thousand accounts, each one embracing from twenty to thirty separate and distinct items, and each item divided into departments, divisions, and sub-divisions in the auditor's office, before a proper settlement of the whole can be effected. There are numerous other reports, not, however, peculiar to every post office, which are not embraced in the above estimate, but which present, in the aggregate, a number scarcely less imposing. There are reports of distributing offices, collecting offices, and large offices generally, such as New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. These reports and correspondence necessarily involve a tremendous expense—first, the General Past Office itself costs annually over two hundred thousand dollars for its clerical force alone; and, secondly, at least an additional hundred thousands sonsumed in the paper, printing, blank books, and labor required in making out these reports—for it must be borne in mind that such reports (as the quarterly accounts) are merely copies of the account current, and other accounts kept in each office, so that theugh one report only is sent, employing from three to six or more p

offices are those whose net proceeds exceed one thousand dollars per annum, and whose incumbents are therefore appointed by the President, of such there are probably not over four hundred altogether. The secondary offices are those next in importance, but whose not proceeds do not reach one thousand dollars per year embracing probably five thousand offices, and situated in flourishing towns, receiving a daily or tri-weekly mail. The third class are those whose incumbents reseive less than one hundred dollars compensation per year; and the fourth and most numerous class, (embracing over ten thousand offices,) may all be called "special offices," because they are generally specially supplied with the mails, from the nearest adjacent office, once or twice a week, for their net proceeds, limited te a specified amount. The compensation of postmasters of special offices in no instance reaches twenty five dollars per annum; but varies from one dollar to twenty five, according to the amount of business transacted. While they yield little tevenue to the Department they are still necessary as greatly enlarging the net-work of post communication, as well as attracting and dispersing population into remote regions. It is against these offices that a reduction of postage is most severely felt, and provision was very "issly made for them in the present law, by which the postmasters will receive the same amount of compensation as previously. Their commissions are also much higher, preportionally, than effices of higher grade; bevides which the postmasters enjoy the privilege of frank ling. The principal item of revenue of these offices proportionally, than effices of higher grade; bevides which, the postmasters enjoy the privilege of franking. The principal item of revenue of these offices is derived from newspapers, and other printed natter. In all small villages, postmasters exert themselves in raising clubs for the large weekly papers and magazines of the populous cities. These publications are afforded at very chesp rates, and and magazines of the populous cases, and, when but one or two mails are received weekly, they are taken, to the entire exclusion of daily papers. They are generally preferred to the local country papers, although received free of postage, for their free circulation only imposed labor and rapposability on the postmaster, without affording him any compensation whatever. It is no unusual aborg, therefore, for a postmaster, at a special office

in Texas, (or any other State, near or remote,) to raise a club of from twenty to one hundred subscribers for a weekly paper or magazine published in New York or Philadelphia, to the almost entire exclusion of the local papers, which, it must be admitted, are generally small, miserably printed, miserably edited, and withal, filled with miserable quack medical advertisements. No wonder, indeed, the local papers are excluded in favor of their more distant city rivals; the wonder is that such trash as is now allowed to circulate free in the mails could be tolerated for one moment, by intelligent and respectable people. The country paper—properly so understood—should be the cheapest as well as the best, for all the purposes of a rural population. It should be the cheapest, because labor, rent, and living are scarcely half as high in country villages as they are in large cities, and these are all the elements that enter into the constitution of these papers, is sufficient to pay the contractor for bringing the mail once or twice a week, while, if the postmaster keeps a store, or an inn, or any other general business, it is the source of attracting the people of the surrounding country to his place of business, by which an incidental advantage accrues.

Now, although there is the widest distinction be-

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tween post offices—a distinction which is marked in the same manner, and their accounts are kept in precisely the same way. This is, in opinion, wrong, in the first place, the expense of creating one of these small offices, owing to the political elements which nearly always enter into their establishment, is far greater than the benefit derived from five years subsequent service. In most cases they are compliments bestowed on such persons at John Smith, Esquire, of Smithville, or "James Brown, Esquire, of Erich was not support. The spirit of land speculation, so characteristic of oncountry, gives them an ephemeral existence, and when this subsides, they sink with it. The department here loses all the trouble and expense of lated, would in many instances appear amaxing. A large force is employed in the Appointment Office to attend to these matters, and every post office established is registered in a score of bookstence. And what else! Why, after lingering a short time, it is discontinued, and a new one established mile or half a mile adjacent, and thence asked in the or time of the established costs the department forty dollars. About the same expense is incurred in every case of a name example swell as for every one different forty dollars. About the same expense is incurred in every case of a name examples well as for every one discontinued. Now, last year, there were upwards of three thousand offices established, changed, and discontinued, which, at an average cost of \$40 each, would give the almost incredible amount of \$120,000. Besides this, changes of postmasters are continually being made, at a very somiderable cost to the Department, not to say serious embarrassment of the service. Within the last two years, not less than fittent thousand removals of postmasters, and other effects of the service, have been made, which, estimated at \$10 each, gives the astounding sum of \$150,000. A corresponding inconvenience in each native, in consequence of such wholesale rumovals. To reform this expense, as well as t ters of these special offices. No wonder, indeed, that their accounts are kept in a wretched manner. The wonder is, that any sane man could anywhere be found willing to assume a task so responsible, so perplexing, and, after all, so thankless in its nature. The circulation of from one to two hundred weekly newspapers, magazines, & s, with a proportionate number of letters, would, after paying the contractors, leave the postmaster a larger average compensation than is afforded him under the present expensive and complicated commission system. tractors, leave the postmaster a larger average compensation than is afforded him under the present expensive and complicated commission system. For their further benefit, however, the present law, prohibiting postmasters from carrying the mail, should, so far as relates to special offices, be repealed. They could generally afford to carry it at cheaper and upon more accommodating rates than others; and whatever benefit is to be derived from this service should at least be at their disposal. By the foregoing plan, very perplexing duries are removed from the mailing postmaster, besides all the expense and trauble, and liability to err. It is incredible what an amount of cerrespondence, blank forms, instructions, receipts, reports, &c., are now thrown away on postmasters of this class, and what difficulties arise in the settlement of their and the contractor's accounts. The amounts involved are sometimes not worth the sheet of paper consumed in auditing them, while the great datay, and numerous official forms required in the auditing and settlement of claims, is one, and, in fact, the principal reason why the cost of transportation is so high—for mail contractors are invariably exposed to every description of delay in receiving their pay, and always make their bids correspondingly high. To

for mail contractors are invariably exposed to every description of delay in receiving their pay, and always make their bids correspondingly high. To show the annoyances of the present contract system, I will illustrate a case. A. B proposes to carry the mail, once or twice a week, over a certain route, ten miles in length, in two horse coaches. He bids ten, twenty, or thirty dollars a year, and the department accepts. First, he receives a letter from the Postmater General, informing him that his offer twenty, or thirty dollars a year, and the department accepts. First, he receives a letter from the Postmaster General, informing him that his offer is accepted. Second, (two or three months after,) two blank contracts are lodged with the postmaster, which he is required to fall up, including two responsible sureties. These contracts must be certified before a magistrate—(why could not the postmaster be clothed with the necessary magisterial power!)—frequently a mile or two distant, at a cost of fifty cents or more. One of the the contracts is then returned to Washington, the other retained by the contractor. Upon the expiration of the first quarter, the contractor naturally looks for his insignificant amount of pay, but the postmaster has received no orders to pay it. A postmaster has received no orders to pay it. pertuanter has received no orders to pay it. A month, two months clapses, when it appears the poor postmaster has made a mistake in his accounts, some way involving the contractor's service. Here is a difficulty. The postmaster does his best to clear up the difficulty, while the enraged contractor is a difficulty. The postmaster does his best to clear up the difficulty, while the enraged contractor is clamorous for his money, and, were it not for "his bond," would peremptorily abandon the service. At last, however, an order is received for the money—but, in the meantime, more talk, paper, and swearing have been expended, than the entire amount involved is worth, which, indeed, rarely exceeds from five to ten dollars per quarter, on these small routes. Why could not the postmaster, therefore, do this serviced I it could be done at a reduction of twenty per cent, which, considering that probably one million and a half of dollars per annum are expended for this description of transportation alone (the entire amount being nearly \$4,000,000), would effect an annual saving of at least two hundred and twenty thousand dollars it is needless to add that this strangement would also very much improve the service, for it must be borne in mind that this is my leading and paramount object in putting forth these speculations.

Although our post establishment is sharacterized by the foregoing classes of office, there are yet other jeatures peculiar to them, which demand further elassification. First, there are collection of fices, where the revenue of particular districts is deposited. Postmasters are sometimes detailed in the collection and settlement of outstanding claims with late postmasters, receiving for their services additional compensation; but more frequently special agents are sent out, incurring, of course, a very considerable expense. Probably not less than \$40,000 per annum is expended in collecting the miscellaneous funds of the Department togetoer in this manner. The second class are a draft offices, where the revenue is suffered to accumulate, subject to the drafts of the Postmaster Concers, in fa-

or of mail contractors and other creditors. The third, and by far the most important effices in the service, are called distributors, upwards of fifty in number, where the mails are overhanded, and the matter assorted for the various routes diverging from them.

Under my arrangements, the grade of offices might more properly be designated as follows.—Ist, The United States General Post Office; 2d, State offices; 3d, county post offices; and this special or sub-offices. The General Post Office, or official head, should retain all the functions peculiar to it now—that of a general direction over the easter post system, but relieved of many of those features which now only embarrass the service, and add greatly to the expense of its support. State offices should be the official heads of county offices, while these should have complete supervision over the various sub-offices in their respective districts. A numerous corps of special and secret agents, acting under the direction of the Postmaster General, as well as the postmasters of State and county offices, should be continually employed in passing over the mail routes, investigating the condition of the service, and tracing up depredations committed upon it. The accounts, reduced to a few simple forms, should be so adapted as to check one class of office, as well as one State, against another, without the expense, the labor, and liability to orr, that is now incurred. To do this, the post bill should be materially changed and simplified. I am disposed to believe that all the ends accomplished by the use of the post bill could be gained by substituting a small circular check, containing the name of the office, the county, and State. The stamp of the office, with the date, should be imprinted on the address side of the letter, as now, with the address side of the letter, as now, with the address aide of the letter, as now, with the address lack of the letter, as now, with the address side of the letter. If paid, a check printed in red should be used; if not paid,

ferred.
Upon unpaid letters, the black check would accompany the letter in like manner, but this would merely give official notice to the receiving postmaster that he stood charged with the collection of the postage. In case, however, he failed to collect, he would be credited with the amount of letters on hand as now.

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The old check could, I think, be used for all transient matter, as well as for letters. Why not? Transient matter is all payable in advance, and I can see no objection to affixing the check to it, in the same manner as upon letters. True, it would be more liable to be torn off; but all paid matter should be placed, as nearly as possible, on equality, in regard to security and accommodation; and by proper precaution, this objection would not be very material.

In reference to unpaid newspapers and periodi-

precaution, this objection would not be very marerial.

In reference to unpaid newspapers and periodicals, rent from the office of publication, the postage is payable at the office of delivery, quarterly in advance; consequently the checks would not be required. Besides, a majority of the post offices, by my "stem, are entitled to all the revenue accrueing from them, and no account, therefore, so far as relates to them, need be kep: As for other offices, they would make a return of the amount of newspaper postage under oath, and the correctness of their statements would always be open to the inquiry and investigation of the numerous secret agents employed in the service. There would be no harm on this point, not half as much as there is new.

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There is a very important feature, long over leoked, which I propose to introduce into our post system—I mean the transmission of money by mail upon the security of the Department. There is no telling the amount of money annually lost through the mail service, owing to the carelessness or depredations of its agents. There is scarcely a merchant, or business man in the Union, who is in the habit of receiving or sending remittances by mail, that does not lose more or less every year. I know parties who lost, last year, from one to twelve hundred dellars in small sums, while I venture to assert that there is not a newspaper or other publishing office in the Union, which does not annually lose from ten to one hundred dollars. Such publishers as Godey, Graham, Sartain & Co., Harper & Brothers, Gen. Graham, Sartain & Co., Harper & Brothers, Gen. Graham, Sartain & Co., Harper & Brothers, Gen-Webb, J. G. Bennett, and others, lose heavily—and how? Ah' there's a mystery. No clue can be obtained to money abstracted from the mail in time to secure it. When it is lost, it is gone forever, and search for it had as well be made in the Atlantic ocean. During the last three years, I should judge that more than fifty thousand dollars have been abstracted from letters passing through the Post Office at Philadelphia alone. I make this estimate from the arrests made and the testimony elicited, of parties charged with purloining money from the mails in that city, during the period specified.

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The arrangements for transmitting money upon the security of the Department might be conducted as follows:—Sub-officers should have a capital of fifty or one hundred dollars, and upon this they might receive on deposit, for transmission, a corresponding amount. Suppose the capital to be one hundred dollars; they could issue drafts to half that amount, while they would always be prepared to cash those drawn upon them, limited in each case to twenty-five dollars. Their accounts being settles quarterly, would allow them a margin for transactions not exceeding four hundred dollars per year.

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The modus operandi of making remittances would be as follows:—John Jones, residing at Branchville Pest office, Clay county, Texas, deposits twenty dollars with the post-master of that office, in favor of James Brown, residing in New York. The post-master gives Mr. Jones a receipt, and then hands him a draft, as follows:—"The postmaster at New York city will pay James Brown twenty dollars, provided he comes forward within eighty days ensuing from the date hereof, and makes proper identification of himself; otherwise he will not pay as directed. This is on account of John Jones, of Branchville, Clay county, Texas. Given under my post office stamp, November 20, 1855.

John Smith, P. M.F.

Mr. Jenes cheiores the draft to Mr. Frown, who, duly receiving it, presents himself to the postmaster,

Mr. James choices the draft to Mr. Frown, who, duly receiving it, presents himself to the postmaster, and receives \$20 in gold. Now, had he received the motey in bank notes from Texas, or any other distant State, there would have been at least twenty cents discount on the amount: whereas the whole cost, (including postage,) of forwarding it in this way would not, or ought not, exceed that amount. The scale of commissions should range at about ten cents for all amounts under five dollars; litteen cents if under ten dollars; twenty cents if under twenty dollars, and thirty cents if under forty, including postage payable in advance. Forty or fitty dollars is about the highest amount any subtimes should draw for, at any one time, unless it be payable at an office of higher graine, when fitty or a hundred dollars might be allowed, according to circumstances. If larger amounts were drawn upon sub-offices, of course a larger capital would be required, otherwise the postmaster would be liable cessionally to run out of funds, which should be guarded against as much as possible. In this case, however, the county office would come to its rescue, (as it always must in settling the accounts quarterly), by receiving the drafts on hand.

Now, all drafts thus issued, would be filed by the postmaster, and, at suitable opportunities, (countersigned or marked by bim as paid), sent to the proper county office, and thence to the State office, where they would be held against other States to

space or marked by him as paid), sent to the pro-per country effice, and thence to the State office, where they would be held against other States to balance accounts, or else forwarded to the General Post Office. All this, however, could easily be objusted in case the feature were indeed to be

At important offices, the amount of money orders outdood into our post system.

At important offices, the amount of money orders outdoor the greatly increased—indeed, on through coutes, where route agents are employed the notey itself could be carried, at the risk of the Department. This is a step however, that I do not advise I endorse the leature only so far as the transmission of small amounts is involved and not advise I endorse the feature only so far as the transmission of small amounts is involved, and I propose to do it in such a manner, that the Department could not, possibly, lose a doilar, while it would probably realise hundreds of thousands per annum, affording, at the same time, the most valuable feature of accommodation that could be embedded in any post-system. In Oreast Britain, the money order system is limited to sums under £5; nevertheless, it is a source of considerable profit to the Department. The last year's profits, if I am not mistaken, exceeded eighty target blowward doilars, besides a

considerable amount laying on hand uncalled for, a portion of which will probably finally accrue to the Department, owing to the death or emigration of the parties interested. I think at least three hundred thousand dollars could be realized annually in this country, were the money order system carried out upon the plan I have proposed. I am induced to believe this from the vast superiority, in that respect, which our country possesses over England. The whole number of post offices there does not exceed eighteen hundred; here it is over twenty thousand. There the currency is good—here the local currency is notoriously bad, the value fluctuating in every State. There the population is confined to a very small area—here it is dispersed over a vast territory, the people separated by long distances, compelling them to use the mail. There the people are not generally as prosperous as here, consequently they do not meet those incidents and emergencies in business which render the mail service auxiliary to their wants. There the newspapers are extremely high in price, and few in number—here they are exceedingly cheap, and circulated in countless thousands, (for which the subscription price is principally forwarded by mail.) In short, there is a complete dissimilarity, all tending to show that for every dollar now sent through money orders in Great Britain, at least twenty dollars would be transmitted here, were a similar accommodation and security afforded.

A recent report from the Census Bureau shews the circulation of the newspaper press of the United States to be as follows. This table is inclusive to the 1st June, 1850:—

No. Copies Printed | No. Copies Printed | Assumable | Assumab Tri-Wesklies 150
Semi Weeklies 125
Weeklies 2000
Semi-Monthlies 50
Monthlies 100
Quarterlies 25

Semi-Monthlies. 25 900,000 10,800,000

Quarterities. 25 26,000 10,800,000

The above 2,800 publications would probably average three dollars each, per year, which, with a circulation of 5,000,000, would yield fifteen millions of dollars Suppose that three millions of this circulation passes through the mails (which, I think, is a very moderate estimate, inasmuch as by far the greater portion of the tri-weekly, weekly, and monthly publications are supplanted by the daily papers in the pepulous towns), we would have nine millions of dollars paid for subscriptions, by mail subscribers. Now, I think there is no doubt but that, under the money order system, at least six millions of this subscription money would be forwarded through the mails, and as they are in amount averaging three dollars each, the commissions, at the rates I have proposed, would amount to one hundred and twenty thousand dollars. This, it will be perceived, is a very considerable amount and allewing one half to accrue to the Department, a clear profit of sixty thousand dollars per annum is derived solely on newspaper subscriptions, to say nothing of the incidental postage originated by such accommodation. It is but fair to presume that, while so much is lost for the want of the money order system, people are restrained and intimidated from making remittances. This operates against the Department in two ways. It first prevents circulation, and thereby materially decreasee the basis upon which correspondence originates, for, without the people read, they will have no occasion to write. Secondly, it loses the postage which would accrue upon pribted matter, in consequence of remittances being withheld.

In addition to the above, a large amount would be account of the content of the people withheld.

read, they will have no occasion to write. Secondly, it loses the postage which would accrue upon printed matter, in consequence of remittances being withheld.

In addition to the above, a large amount would be remitted for books, which I propose to carry in the mail at rates as cheap, if not cheaper, than any expressman would undertake to do—and with equal despatch and security. Under the present law, the rates for books are entirely too high, and requiring the postage to be pre-paid, is simply throwing an impediment in the way of the purchasee, which smounts to a prohibition. When a man, living in a remote or isolated section of the country, remits money to a publisher for a book, he gives prima fucit evidence of his intention to take it from the post office when delivered, and of his willingness to pay the postage. But under the present law he is intimidated from making a remittance, because he does not know what amount of postage to remit, and rather than put the publisher to inconvenience in regard to pre-paying the same, he declines making any order. The theory of pre payment in a strictly business community like ours, will not answer—it destroys correspondence. I shall probably have more to say on this head hereafter. Without entering into an elaborate argument to show the probable profits of the money order system, I will put down three hundred thousand dollars as the amount which I have no doubt could be annually realized. In regard to the accommodation it would afford every one may judge for himself without the trouble of going into estimates.

I will now consider the most important and difficult branch of our post system, viz, the distribution service. Distributing offices are those at which the mails are overhauled, and where the matter they contain is placed on the proper routes leading to the various post-offices addressed. They are nothing more nor less than lighthouses, to guide the mails into the proper courses or channels. A post-master in Maine, receiving a letter addressed to some effice in

missions and compensation. If a letter, by acci-dent or indirection, goes through three or four dis-tributing offices, this seven per cent is charged against it—so that, although but two distributions are authorized, there is nothing to prevent three or four from being charged; thus swelling the amount from fourteen per cent to twenty-one and twenty-eight per cent. All the postage accruing upon the letter, after deducting ordinary commissions and experses, is caten up, and the Department no doubt

expenses, is caten up, and the Department no doubt often sustains a less.

Since the agitation of the subject of cheap postages, (1844,) various attempts have been made to abolish or modify this service—for, in addition to the expense, it retards the progress of mail matter very much, and is probably the direct cause of nearly sell the delays and failures complained of by the press and people in all quarters of the country. It is not merely the assoring of the mail matter that is required, but it originates pew and separate accounts, and concurses a vast amount of wrapping paper, post bills, &c., besides requiring extraordinary facility and despatch to properly perform the service.

Major Hobbie, the late head of the Contract Office, (and of whose ability, during the short time I remained under his official cogurance, I was no less a daily witness than an admirer,) speke as follows of this branch of the service, in his report last

of this branch of the service, in his report last year:—
The evils incident to this operation are too frequent distribution, and consequent unnecessary expense and delay. Originally, the regulations of the Department entemplated two distributions on each transmission to a distant place; for many years past, but one; but, in set, they occur so frequently in many cases as to absorb simest all that remains of the portage of the letter, after taking out the delivery commission. The cause of these wils is obvious; it is much easier to mail the letter to the geat distributing office, which is well known, and so the solution of the whole route, than to and out the ultimate distributing circle to which the office addressed belongs, and the availty to swell the commission fund encourages the practice. But this is not the worst. On being delaired to receive a distribution making, the letter, in mitoty-blue cases out of a bundred loves its connection with the outgoing mails and verticus unnecessary delays are those coasticated. In a former report I showed that distribution is obvious in other countries, and entirely provided to the present state of our mails. But a substitute relating for forwarding mails, for the purpose of guiding them to distant places in the right channels, by resirive regulations, is fudiagenrable. To effect the

are then economics. In a former report I showed that distribution is obscine in other countries, and entirely uncluded to the present state of our mails. But a substitute seek me for forwarding mails, for the purpose of guiding them to distent places in the right channels, by positive regulations, is indispensable. To effect the change, evitain modifications of the present law, and provision for getting and putting in operation the new plan, will be necessary.

Let "distribution" be abolished upon all except seagoing mails. I seue written instructions, or rather partiy written and partly grinted, to every peat office in the United States, how to bug its mailer, and the matter of their officer passing through it, to every either office in the United States—the chaf portion of which could be stated in said instructions under the names of States, or by counties in the State. What is here stated in so brief a space, would be the work of great labor, requiring for its execution the best and most minute knowledge of mail arrangements, and the course of the mails that the Department posseries, to be sided by personal consultation with the principal pestmasters in all parts of the Cusion. On a line between two given offices, the latermediate points where the routes join each other that give the most direct course would be specified as bagging points. Ristain one foot of your compass on one of these extreme points, and shift the other to a new point on the citcle, and you will see that new intermediate points of convertions are the most of the greatest points of the greatest points of convertions counted the frequency of their supply, the speed and connections, and the probable amount of matter in filling a bag. Apply this illustration to the incitor of the owner of the supply of the provider of which it is important to consider the frequency of their supply of matter in filling a bag. Apply this illustration to the instructions which this scheme of bagging and forwarding will require. It would nake a year to get them u

shift the package from one bag to another, agreeably to the specific regulation. And with how much less olsrical force in the office could this process be performed than the complicated operation of opening the mail, resorting the letters, remailing them, with new post-bills and new entries in the accounts, and rewrapping, tying, and hagging it. And then the copying of these voluminous distribution accounts, and the labor and trouble of their settlement, are dispensed with. The saving in clerk-hire will be very great, and the business in all respects be better done. The accounts can be more easily checked when they are conflued exclusively to the mailing and receiving office; and the stace of letters through the mails, in case of lots, can be made with far more certainty than now. The large offices will object, on account of the loss of the distribution; but the necessity of it will in a great measure cases on being relieved of the distribution work. The force employed on it can be dispensed with. The labor of mailing the matter originating at the large offices will, doubtless, be greater than now, as mails will have to be divided into a greater number of packages; but this increase will be small in comparison with the distribution work that will be discontinued. If more clerk-hire is necessary than what the delivery commissions will pay for, it will be better and after to submit the matter to the Postmaster General, to order such additional clerk-hips, and pay for them out of the general fund, than incur the liability to the abuses which you so well know the present system is subject to.

When the reduction of the rates in 1845 was cou-

when the reduction of the rates in 1845 was contemplated, the Postmaster General issued an order allowing but one distribution. The mailing postmaster, under this order, was required to mail his letter to the distributing office nearest to the office addressed. Now this was an extraordinary requirement; yet the expense and clay of distribution was such, that it seemed to have been absolutely necessary to justify a reduction of the rates of postage. A postmaster in the interior of Maine, for example, receiving a letter addressed to a place in Missouri, er any other State, was required to designate the proper distribution; and how was he to do it? What was the point? The Postmaster General, to be sure, caused some printed instructions to be prapered, but they were, in their very nature, so complicated that few could act upon them, and for this reason—that a distribution which would be proper for mail matter emanating from the East would not be proper for mailer of connection with depending routes, all of which are exposed to variations with the change of seasons, the opening and closing of navigation, the completion of railways, &c.; so that, although the nearest distributor to the office addressed, might be the proper one under ordinary circumstances, yet, from the nature of the routes, a distributor intermediate on the route, or even nearest to the mailing office, might prove to be the proper one in many instances. Suppose a letter mailed in North or South Carolina, for Columbia, Pa, which is on the Susquekanna river, nearly equidistant from Baltimore and Philadelphia; the mailing postmaster would be required to send the letter to Philadelphia for distribution. Whereas, it should be arrested at Baltimore, by which means it would save the one hundred milet travel between that city and Philadelphia, and reach its destination over day earlier. Suppose, however, that the letter was addressed to Lebanon, or to Pine Grove, or to Pottsville, the mailing postmaster would probably send it to Baltimore; whereas, in this

Department.

Now, let me inquire, why is such folly as this allowed in one of the most important arms of the government—a branch in which all are more or less interested! Why has this abuse been suffered year after year! Simply because, as I have before stated, the individual interest felt in the subject is stated, the individual hterest felt in the subject is so small, the responsibility shared by so many secret hands, and the stupendous machinery at work so complicated, that few persons are willing, if they really felt themselves competent, to make a full exposition to excite the spirit of reform. The Department, from a very insignificant beginning, has of late years grown into such dimensions and extraordinary importance, that it has forgation to

Department, from a very insignificant beginning, has of late years grown into such dimensions and extraordinary importance, that it has forgotten to change its system of discipline. The evils, therefore, which originated with it, "have grown with its growth," and they are now so thoroughly riveted and dove tailed into the whole system, that there is really no other alternative for improvement than the complete demolition of the monster, "with all its imperfections on its head."

Mr. Hall, the present Postmanter General, like reveral of his predecessors, experimented for some time with this distribution scheme, in the hope, probably, that he would be successful, and therefore imputalize himself by creating a permanent, cheap restage system. He, however, has met the common fate; for after straining every nerve to maintain single distribution—after vainly issuing orders and circulars, and pronunciamentos, solemnly enjoining it—he suddenly wheeled about and ordered double distribution—probably finding it, upon the whole, less expensive, although calculated to retard the transit of mail matter. We have now, therefore, all the expense and delay of two distributions, with many of the evils of single distributions. Without going into details to show the prohable cost of this branch of the service, I will put it down, (all things direct and indirect, considered,) at faur hundred thousand dollars per annum.

New, I propose to secure direct mailing, without delay, without everhauling, without postbilling to distributors. I consider the plan proposed by Major Hobbie too complicated—in fact, it is no better than the present system, except that it aves postbilling.

major Hobbie too complicated—in fact, it is no better than the present system, except that it saves postbilling. But it will not save money, nor won'd it scoure calcrity in transmission. The removal is successful to complete and thorough, or it will be no reform at all. What I propose is, to mail direct; and now, let me show how this is to be deeper.

The General Post Office is the only place in the United States where the details of our transportation service, and all its concomitant branches are understood. And why! Because it is the immediate and parameters of this office to keep all the affairs of the Department in systematic order. To enable if to do this, it prescribes the names of offices, and ascertains their exact geographical position. This dose, it prescribes the necessary supplies of mail conveyance to and from each office. To facilitate this duty, it divides the transportation service into routes, arranged in numerical order, proceeding from route No. I to No 7,000. It divides these routes into grades, according to the mode of conveyance and the amount of matter carried over them. When a post office is established, it is supplied from the route upon waich it happens to be situated, or, if it be not on one, a route is extended so as to embrace it, or else a new reute created. To ascertain, therefore, how often and from what point any post office is supplied, reference is made to the indexes of the route, where all the particulars are exposed. Thus, for example, I wish to know from what point Branchville, Mo, receives its supply of mail matter. I look for the name of the office in books kept for that purpose, and first that it is supplied by route 6,000; and by reference to the schedule of that route, I learn that the mail leaves a certain post office at a certain hour, The General Post Office is the only place in the reference to the schedule of that route, I learn that the mail leaves a certain post office at a certain hour, the mail leaves a certain post office at a certain hour, on a certain day, or days, supplying Branchville, with other offices, on the way—the distance being ten, twenty, or a hundred miles, as the case may be, and the mode of conveyance steamboat, rail-read, four-horse or two-horse coach, or Romsback. Here we have all the particulars; and this, with the further assistance of some maps pointing out the course of the mail routes, is what enables the Pestmester General and his assistants to give every information as to distribution and mail conveyance in every special case.

every special case. The names of the post offices, with the number The names of the post offices, with the number and details of the routes from which they are respectively supplied, should be prized, and a stopy and to every postmaster in the service. This would enable him to mail direct; it would place him precisely on the same footing as the Postmaster of the prized himself, for the environment of the prized that the prized himself, for the environment of the prized that the prized himself, for the environment of the prized that the prized himself, for the environment of the prized that the prized that

pos the supply and position of an office at a remote print. it would not require a second to jance as the index, and, in case this were not clear choogle, a glance at the map with should accompany the both of modes, and the supply of the property of the

comparison with the rates for letters. Mr. Hail is said to be a great man in small things, and is much complimented for his industry and close sorutiny into the smaller details of his office. Those compliments, as I happen to know, are well earned; but, I am sorry to be compelled to add, earned at the expense of a more lofty, far-seeing, and comprehensive administration of his functions, by which great evils are nourished, and sprout out agent he saines of little ones. He estence by recommended reduced rater; but while the people asked for bread, he has given them a stone. While postage generally seems low, it is encumbered with so many "tates" and discriminations, that the whole thing is hard to understand, and redounds equally against the to understand, and redounds equally again government as well as individuals. Errors a

and discriminations, that the whole thing is hard to understand, and redounds equally against the government as well as individuals. Errors and misprehensions are continually occurring, and the officers who are, by his own declaration, so "ignorant and incompetent," are entirely mobile to carry put his intentions without annoyance to themselves and oppression to their fellow-citizens.

It are nowledge neither the justice nor propriety of the In cartment allowing one description of printed mat, at to pass free, and another to be saddled with heav," rates of postage. In a free government, every and stands alike, and no insidious distinction should be "able to the prejudice of any generally. It is the pride of our country, that the generally. It is the pride of our country, that the people are a reading people. Our institutions, and their rights as citizens, make reading a once their duty and their pleasure. He is indeed a boid man, who, in a country like ours, and in an age like the present, would circumscribe the bounds of an otherwise free press, and that, too, upon the most delicative and absurd apprehensions, that the circulation clogs up the mails, and impairs the celerity of their transportation. Suppose it does—why cannot the transportation be improved I and, if so, why take away the prop that sustains it? Destroy or impair the circulation of prioted macter, our post establishment loses its value, and ould nover sastain itself. Instead of builty striking out for impairs the circulation of prioted macter, our post establishment loses its value, and could nover sastain itself. Instead of builty striking out for impairs the circulation of prioted macter, our post establishment loses its value, and could nover sastain itself. Instead of builty striking out for impairs the circulation of prioted macter, our post establishment loses its value, and of our house, the instance of our transportation, the Departments continually combatting the very means that, properly used, would enable it to do this—warring continu